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Chattanooga

Mildred Throne

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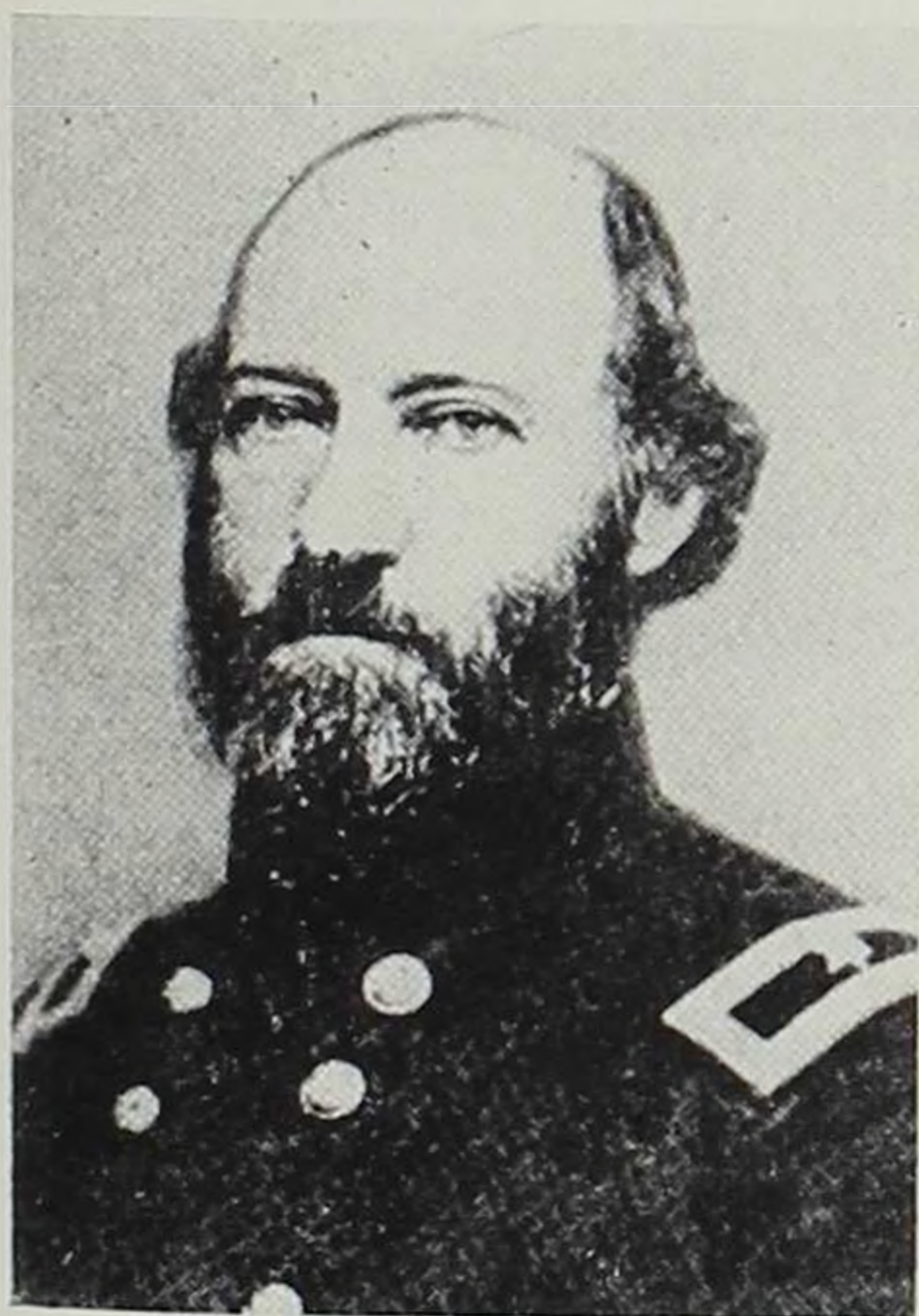
Chattanooga

Even before Grant negotiated with Pemberton before Vicksburg, he had set Sherman's corps in motion toward the Big Black, to cut off Johnston who was known to be approaching in a vain effort to relieve Vicksburg. Johnston immediately retreated to Jackson, with Sherman hard on his heels.

Fortifications had been built around Jackson by the Confederates, and Sherman settled down to a siege, which lasted only from July 9 to 16, when Johnston evacuated during the night. Sherman did not attempt to pursue him because of the intense heat and the exhaustion of his men.

The Union losses would have been small during this siege had it not been for a mistake by General Jacob G. Lauman on July 12. Lauman's division had been temporarily assigned to the 13th Army Corps, now under the command of Brigadier General E. O. C. Ord. On the night of July 11, Ord had placed Lauman in position on the railroad south of Jackson. The following morning, without orders and without notifying Ord, Lauman sent one brigade forward in an unsupported attack on a heavily fortified position. There were some 880 men in the brigade; of these,

465 were casualties before the men could retreat to safety. Ord, arriving on the scene shortly after this fiasco, promptly relieved Lauman, whose military career, begun so brilliantly, ended with this disgrace. The 3rd Iowa was in the brigade sent



JACOB G. LAUMAN

forward by Lauman. Of the 241 men of the 3rd, 113 were casualties: 17 killed, 57 wounded, and 39 missing or captured. Total casualties in the fifteen other Iowa infantry, two cavalry, and two artillery regiments at Jackson were 88: 6 killed, 44 wounded, and 38 missing or captured.

After the victories of Vicksburg and Jackson, the 13th Army Corps was sent south to join General Banks, and the 15th Corps under Sherman went into camp on the Big Black. Meanwhile, Rosecrans, with the Army of the Cumberland, had been sent to East Tennessee. There, on September 19-20 he was badly defeated by Confederate General Braxton Bragg at the battle of Chickamauga, and had retreated into Chattanooga, where he was besieged. Fearing that Rosecrans might give up Chattanooga and retreat north of the Tennessee River, Halleck ordered

Sherman forward and instructed Grant to proceed at once to the relief of Rosecrans.

Before he reached Chattanooga, Grant was placed in command of all the armies between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi, and Sherman had been given the Army of the Tennessee. Grant relieved Rosecrans and replaced him with General George H. Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga," who had continued the fight at that famous creek while Rosecrans had retreated into Chattanooga. Two divisions under General Joseph Hooker were also sent to Chattanooga from the Army of the Potomac.

Large armies move slowly, and Sherman was delayed by orders from Halleck to repair the railroad as he went. When Grant found Chattanooga under siege by Bragg, he ordered Sherman forward as fast as possible, but it was not until mid-November that Sherman could complete the 330-mile march from his original camp on the Big Black. Meanwhile, Grant had opened supply lines to relieve the starving Army of the Cumberland.

Chattanooga lies on the south bank of the Tennessee River, which runs west past the city and then makes a sharp turn southward to the base of Lookout Mountain, where the Confederates were intrenched. East of Chattanooga lies the almost impregnable Missionary Ridge, also held by Bragg. Between the two heights is the valley of

Chattanooga Creek. The battleground thus provided by nature formed a huge amphitheater. The Union generals could stand on the lowland in front of Chattanooga and see the entire battlefield rising above them. At night the city seemed hemmed in by the rows of glittering Confederate campfires on the heights. Bragg could have taken Chattanooga immediately after his victory at Chickamauga, but he evidently preferred to starve the Union army into surrender. He reckoned without the organizing genius of Grant. He should have remembered another battle on the Tennessee River in 1862. On April 6 of that year the Confederates were victors at Shiloh; on April 7 they were defeated by Grant.

Bragg had also weakened his own forces by sending General James Longstreet and his corps northeast to attack General Ambrose E. Burnside at Knoxville, Tennessee. Grant's task was now to relieve Chattanooga by defeating Bragg and then to hurry to Burnside's rescue.

Grant placed Hooker on his right to attack Lookout Mountain, kept the Army of the Cumberland in the center, and sent Sherman to the left for the attack on Missionary Ridge. He planned for Hooker and Sherman to move at the same time, on the right and left, and then to throw in Thomas' army in the center at the right moment.

With Hooker on the right was one division of Sherman's Army of the Tennessee — the First



Harper's Weekly, December 26, 1863

The Battle Above the Clouds — Lookout Mountain

Division under General Osterhaus. With Osterhaus were the 4th, 9th, 25th, 26th, 30th, and 31st Iowa Infantry and the First Iowa Artillery. With Sherman on the left were four more Iowa regiments — the 5th, 6th, 10th, and 17th. No Iowa regiments were in the Army of the Cumberland.

During the night of November 23-24, Grant moved. Hooker prepared to strike at Lookout Mountain, while Sherman, crossing his army from its hidden camp north of the river, intrenched his troops at the foot of Missionary Ridge.

The morning mists, coupled with the smoke of battle, hid the top of Lookout Mountain from the view of watchers below, so that Hooker's famous "battle above the clouds" could only be followed by the sounds of cannon and artillery. He sent his infantry forward, up the slopes of the mountain, while his artillery pounded the Confederate positions. By nightfall Hooker's men had reached the base of the fifty-foot wall of rock which marked the summit. There, the enemy guns on the top could not reach them.

Meanwhile, in the same morning mists, Sherman had reached the top of Missionary Ridge before the enemy knew of his presence. There he met such strong resistance that he could not move. His opponent was General P. R. Cleburne, the same officer who had been the first to attack Sherman's position at Shiloh. The battle ended that day in a stalemate.

The following day was clear, and Grant could see, from his observation post on Orchard Knob in front of Chattanooga, "column after column of Bragg's forces moving against Sherman." Hooker had found Lookout Mountain evacuated that morning, and had descended into the valley, to cross Chattanooga Creek and strike the enemy rear, according to plan. However, the bridge over the creek had been destroyed, and Hooker was delayed some four hours in getting his troops over.

At last, Grant ordered Thomas' impatient Army of the Cumberland forward to strike the center and relieve the pressure on Sherman. Jealous of the role of Sherman and Hooker in the battle, these men were eager to prove themselves. Led by Generals Philip Sheridan and Thomas J. Wood, the two divisions sprang forward, took the first line of enemy rifle-pits on the slopes of Missionary Ridge in a rush, paused for breath and then, without orders, continued up the slope in the face of deadly fire until they reached the summit and drove the Confederates from their seemingly impregnable position. Retreating in disorder, the enemy was met at Rossville Gap by Hooker's men and many fell prisoner to the onrushing Yankees. When it became obvious that Bragg could not reform his army, which was now a "disorganized mob," Grant ordered Sherman to give up further pursuit and to move at once toward Knoxville.

Sherman's men were ill equipped for another march. They had left their camps north of the Tennessee on November 23 with but two or three days' rations, no change of clothing, "stripped for the fight, with but a single blanket or coat per man, from myself to the private included," as Sherman wrote. Now they had to march to the relief of Burnside in weather growing colder daily. They made the march in five days, in spite of these handicaps.

With Sherman's approach, Longstreet raised the siege of Knoxville and retreated into Virginia. Thus Grant had secured East Tennessee to the Union, and the authorities at Washington rejoiced. Lincoln wrote: "God bless you all."

IOWA'S THREE MONUMENTS AT CHATTANOOGA

Lookout Mountain

Rossville Gap

Missionary Ridge

